Guide to Planning your Course (Re)development for Online Delivery

This practical guide is for instructors who would like to transition their classroom-based course to online delivery. We have taken best practices, methods, and processes from BCIT's 30-year history in distance education, and revised and distilled them for the BCIT instructor who is new to online courses. We assume that you have already taught your course at least once so that you already have a course outline, a working syllabus with activities and assessments, and various course materials.

This guide will:

- Explain what you need to know as you start planning and developing your course
- Guide you through the design of your online course

Course design is critical to the success of your course development process, particularly when developing learning for online. Course design requires you to determine the activities and assessments needed to achieve learning outcomes, select media, and select appropriate technologies. These decisions will lead to a course blueprint which outlines the approach, organization and design specifications of the course.

We do not want you to be disillusioned: designing and developing a high quality online course is a lot of work. For many programs that are fully distance-based online programs at BCIT, we typically have teams of people involved over a number of months to develop a new online course. As an individual instructor doing the work yourself, plan for multiple iterations of your course. Each time you offer your course is your best work. Then take what you have learned and apply it to your course for the next time.

Remember, the key factors you have in your favour that projects teams don't have is that you are the expert in your field, and you know your students best. You have already taught in the classroom and you have a body of work and a body of experience to draw from.

You can always contact us at the Learning and Teaching Centre for your questions: https://www.bcit.ca/learning-teaching-centre/key-contacts/

Order of Steps in this Guide

1. Get Started with your Course Outline and Current Classroom Syllabus

Revisiting your course outline and syllabus gives you the chance to review your course's outcomes and description. As you translate your course for online delivery, you will likely have to re-think some of your activities and teaching approaches so that you may be able to achieve the same outcomes via a different, online, route.

As you review your current course outline and classroom syllabus, consider these elements:

1. **Where your course fits into your program.** What are your course pre-requisites and is your course a pre-requisite for another course? These considerations will help you ensure that the activities you plan for your online course design are at the appropriate scope and level.
2. **How your course is related to your program's goals.** Knowing this will help you ensure that what you include in your online course is aligned with your program's overall outcomes.
3. **Who your students are:** e.g., their previous knowledge, learning skills, familiarity with using technology. Getting a good picture of your students will help your design decisions regarding use of technology and the supports you need to design into the course to help them overcome the gaps that distance education can create (such as opportunities for frequent feedback).

In revisiting your current course outline and syllabus, also consider the general expectations that you have about student workload and your own workload.

Student workload = classroom hours (or equivalence) + preparation/homework hours. Usually, you estimate student workload based on the amount of time an average student in the program completes per hour. As you shift your course to an online environment, keep in mind how any changes in activities will affect the overall workload expectations you have of your students. For example, if you decide not to use the Virtual Classroom to replace what were classroom hours, the activities that you require students to do instead should be equivalent in time to complete.

BCIT Policy 5012 can give you further general clarification and you can also consult your program head and other instructors about the number of hours student spend in preparing for classroom learning and working on homework. Keep these numbers in mind when you design/revise a course in order to avoid overwhelming your students and yourself!

And don't forget to use the **Online Quality Checklist** to work backwards about what elements you should be including.

2. Get your Course Plan (or Blueprint) Started

Why use a blueprint?

Mapping out your course using a course plan template helps you achieve "constructive alignment" (Biggs, 1999) among learning outcomes, assessment methods, and learning/teaching activities.

The alignment has a student-centered focus and ensures:

- All learning outcomes are addressed and assessed.
- Assessment methods chosen are aligned with learning outcomes and are meaningful and related to real life tasks
- Student workload is balanced during the term and more emphasis is given to major or more difficulty learning outcomes.
- Choose instructional strategies and design learning activities that foster active learning, accommodate diverse learning preferences, and help students achieve the learning outcomes.
- Estimate your own workload. It should feel reasonable!

Biggs' Theory of Constructive Alignment (Adapted from Biggs, 1999)

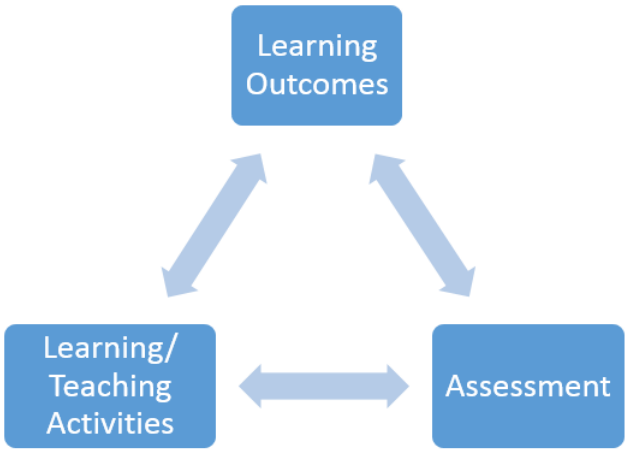

Diagram 1: Bigg's Constructive Alignment

Many educators suggest using the Backward Model (Wiggins & McTighe) when designing a course as it helps you achieve constructive alignment. A more pragmatic benefit of using this model is to help you stay focused on what you want to achieve without overwhelming your students and yourself.

> *"Our lessons, units, and courses should be logically inferred from the results sought, not derived from the methods, books, and activities with which we are most comfortable. Curriculum should lay out the most effective ways of achieving specific results… in short, the best designs derive backward from the learnings sought."*
>
> - Wiggins & McTighe (p14)

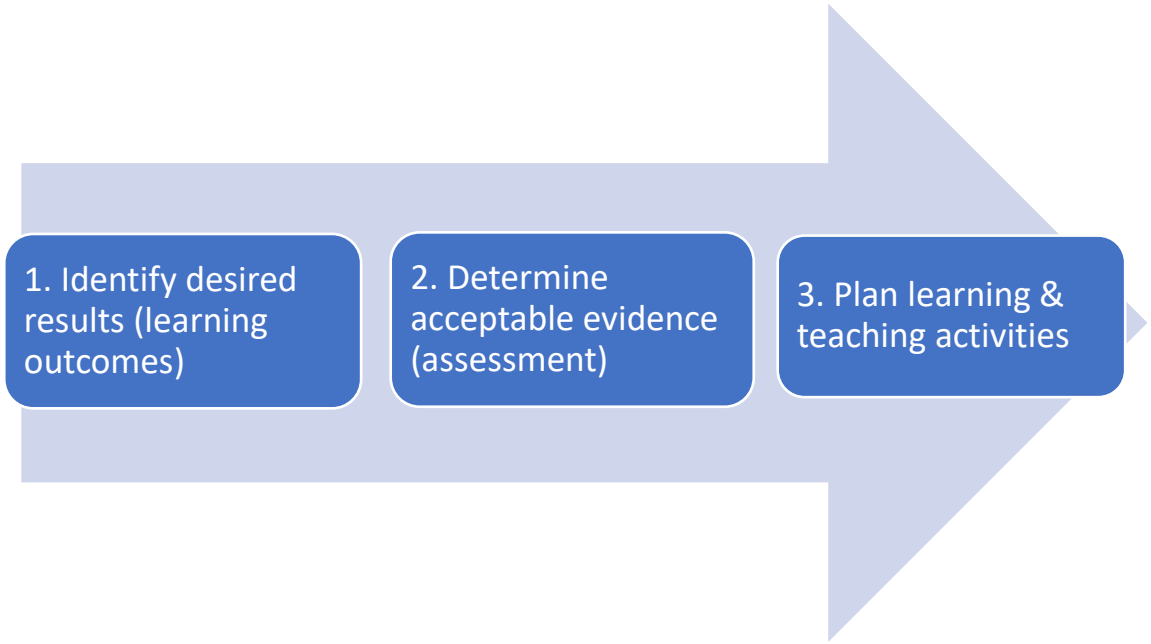

Diagram 2: Stages of Backward Design

Find more resources for designing your course on the Learning and Teaching Centre's Resources page.

Download a blueprint template, Course Plan [DOCX] for getting started designing your course

Using a blueprint will help you determine the online course structure

Defining the course structure involves designing the online environment, within the context of the learning management system (BCIT's Learning Hub). The online environment is matched to the teaching and learning approach: learning activities, course notes, and online tools such as quizzes and discussions, all contribute to what makes up a course online, and must be aligned and integrated for an optimal learning experience.

3. What is your Teaching and Learning Approach?

Consider how your face-to-face teaching strategies translate to the online environment. Which particular instructional strategies are most appropriate for the outcomes of your course? Are there specific instructional strategies used across your program? For example, does your program's curriculum thread problem-based learning into different courses?

Your instructional strategies drive the approach you will take to the facilitation of learning in your online course design. It is important to remember that your learning outcomes—not technology—should determine how you approach the online activities and strategies.

Many of the instructional strategies you use in a face-to-face setting can also be used online (group discussions, writing activities, project-based learning, etc.), and these may be the most viable options as you shift as they are relatively easy to translate to the online environment.

And just like in your campus-based class, active learning strategies shape effective online learning.

Course components

A simplistic way to think about shifting our teaching to online is to divide up we do as instructors into four main categories: assign tasks, deliver content, give and gather feedback, and provide support. The table below has some basic examples to show you what we mean.

Assign tasks	Deliver content	Give & gather feedback	Provide support
•Provide assignments •Give homework •Direct learning activities •Ask for participation	•Give demonstrations • Make presentations & give lectures •Curate readings •Curate videos	•Mark assignments & exams •Give non-formal feedback during actitivities •Gather peer and self-assessments	•Clear instructions & expectations •Office hours •Respond to requests for help

Much of what we do in our classrooms is a holistic combination of these tasks that we are rarely conscious of. It can be useful to think more deliberately about each as you plan your online course, as it helps you ensure that you have included aspects of each.

Lesson Planning & Thinking Asychronously

You might have found that some of the lessons that you teach in your class translate very easily to the online environment, and some don't translate at all. Some tools such as the Virtual Classroom allow you to continue presenting your lessons to your students. But associated activities, such as showing a related video and having your students respond to it at the same

time in the same digital place, is awkward or even not possible. You might have tried to replicate exactly what you do in the face-to-face classroom with your students in the Virtual Classroom and found it next to impossible. Without a doubt, the various online tools that we have available to us our powerful but they cannot provide exactly the same environment as face-to-face learning spaces, or the functionalities to do exactly what we did in our classrooms. Online learning technologies, do, however, give us the ability to spread our lessons out over time.

Think about what you and your class are actually doing: you and your students come together at the same time in the same physical location each week. And these meetings are spread out over multiple weeks, until the class comes to an end. In the time when you don't meet with your students, you probably expect them to be doing some work related to your course: some preparatory homework, an assignment, meeting with a student team for project work, preparing for an exam. Whether or not your students get that work done in those in-between times is up to them, and they will be accountable, at least to themselves, for whether or not they got that work done when you next meet all together in your class for the subsequent session.

As you shift your class to online learning, you will probably have to consider more activities that can be spread out across the week. Spreading activities across a greater time period beyond the scheduled classroom meeting time allows your students to perform the work at a time when they are available in order to meet the deadline that you set. An online learning environment supports these kinds of activities because they provide the shared digital space in which all of the classwork can occur. It is accessible by the whole class and you, and students can also contribute to it. Planning your lessons to spread out across time is often referred to as asynchronous learning.

	Synchronous Learning	Asynchronous Learning
Definition	Learning that involves a group of students engaging in learning at the same time	A student-centred learning method using online resources to facilitate information outside the constraints of time and place among people
Examples of Associated Activities	Conducting sessions in Virtual Classroom and using instant messaging for real- time learning	Interacting with the Learning Hub, communicating using email, posting in discussion

Here are three examples of where instructors modified their lessons from face-to-face to online to accommodate both the limitations of the technologies, as well as the schedules of their students:

→ In the classroom, an instructor broke up her lecture with videos. She provided students with a focus question in advance of the video, and then they watched the video together. After the video, she facilitated a group discussion based on the focus questions. Now that she is teaching online, she has planned the lesson differently because the Virtual Classroom prevents her from being able to share with students the sound from the video that is playing.

She has created a lesson page in her Learning Hub course that directs students to watch the videos in advance of the Virtual Classroom session of that week. She includes the focus questions as well. During the scheduled Virtual Classroom session, she continues to break up her lecture, but for the discussion with students only, since they are supposed to have already watched the videos to prepare.

→ An instructor facilitates a great deal of student-centred discussions in his face-to-face classroom so that they break down and analyze topics through talking with each other. In trying to replicate this instructional strategy in the Virtual Classroom during the emergency switch to online, he found that his students were not willing to go into great detail with issues using their audio or even using the chat.

Because he needed to generate a participation mark to get students to the end of the course, he invited them to email him their responses. The types of conversations he used to have in the classroom then switched to one-on-one dialogues over time through email. In planning for his future online course, he will shift all of the discussion questions to the discussion forums in his Learning Hub course. Facilitating the discussions over a set period of time in the discussion forums allows everyone to respond to the question prompts, to see the responses of other students, and to chime in if they feel they have something to add.

→ An instructor's main concern with the shift to online has been with online quizzes, assignments and exams because these are open book activities, and it is hard to prevent cheating. As a result, he has made dramatic changes to how he will assess students as he moves his class online.

Rather than attempting to replicate the testing environment that is possible in the classroom, he has made the following two changes: he put the exams online, accepting that they are open book, but lowered their overall weighting in the grades, and he changed the two assignments to more complex projects that substantiate the increased marks weighting he shifted from the exams over to them. For the two assignments, he will use a process approach to the assessment, where students are required to submit early in-progress work for part of the overall marks. Doing so provides students formative feedback for their in-progress assignments. Importantly, it also helps the instructor see the evolution of individual students' work over time, helping him get a sense of individual students themselves, and being able to flag a little more easily potential academic dishonesty should there be any sudden changes.

We don't stop planning well-structured lessons for our students as we shift to online. We often think of lessons as classroom-based activities; however, planning our online courses is also equally a lesson planning exercise. The difference is that we can shift lesson elements to occur at different times in the shared digital space. Developing a course blueprint for your online course will help you map out that shift, and help you keep track of the different elements that go into the lesson.

And the usual advice about lesson planning is worth repeating: As you plan your lesson keep in mind your students: who they are, what they already know, why they should learn this, what they must learn and what they must do in order to learn. The instructor and students each do different things at each stage of the lesson. Each part should flow smoothly into the next.

4. Assemble Course Components: Learning Activities

You will be determining learner activities that are best suited to your course in the online environment. Authentic learning activities are aligned with your outcomes and assessment strategies and can ultimately be linked to current industry needs and emphasize students' capability to perform job-related tasks.

Some examples are:

- group discussions
- group projects
- reflective blogging
- use of textbooks
- online course notes
- presentations
- interactive multimedia
- graphic elements
- individual assignments
- frequent self-quizzes

Learning activities often require you to decide how you will assign the activities, what content areas will students need to know in advance and during the activity, and how you will give feedback and what kind of feedback.

When developing an online course, you will be spending a lot of time planning and completing the learner activities before the course delivery so that the entire course is complete before being delivered to students. Additionally, you are helping your students in advance by letting them know the course schedule of activities at the start of the course so that they can plan and manage their time.

- Which learning activities will be used in the course?
- When will they occur?
- What is the content of the activities themselves?
- What are the directions to students?
- Will the activities be evaluated? How will they be evaluated?

Activity tools available by default in your Learning Hub course

The following are the five biggest tools available in the Learning Hub that are used for activities that support learning. The list that follows is by no means exhaustive and there are many more tools available. But these are the tools that are used by most instructors most of the time

because they capture essential elements of teaching and learning: social interaction, demonstration of learning, and feedback.

And you can use each of these tools in an inexhaustible list of different ways to support learning activities, so it is not our intention to define those. Instead, we want to make you aware of them and how to access them so that you can use them to design engaging learning activities that are appropriate for your program and your students.

Discussions

The Discussions activity tool in the Learning Hub is where asynchronous discussion forums take place. There are many opportunities, and many reasons, to use student- to-student and student-to-instructor discussion forums in online courses. A discussion can be more formally robust where they focus on reactions to a reading, analysis of a case study, or application of theory to practice. And a discussion forum can also be a less formal space for students to connect with each other over projects, problem-solving and troubleshooting. Discussions contribute to learning, make collaboration possible, and generally bring courses taught at a distance to life.

Assignments

Your course in the Learning Hub contains the Assignment Tool which you can use for students to upload their assignments. You can set the due dates and for how long you would like to keep the acceptance period open. You assign the work, create a folder in the Assignment tool, and students submit their work. You can provide feedback and mark their work in a number of ways, including using an annotation tool, downloading/marking feedback/uploading, and using the feedback fields within the folder for each student. The Assignment tool accepts a broad range of file formats, so it is a flexible and adaptable tool to use in your teaching.

Quizzes

The Quizzes tool in your Learning Hub course is where your students' effort on all the quizzes and exams take place and are recorded by the learning management system. Use the Quizzes tool for any quiz that you require students' efforts to be tracked. This could be for self-quizzes so that students themselves can track how often they do the quiz and what their changing results are. It could also be for mid-terms and exams, where it is necessary for the Learning Hub to record and track student results.

The Quizzes tool allows for many different question types including long-answer and inserting images, and also enables many different kinds of quiz settings, such as unlimited attempts, so that you can use the tool for many other teaching purposes beyond one-attempt final exams.

Instructors have used the Quizzes tool for student reflective activities, for example, in a situation that required students' responses to be organized and tracked.

Virtual Classrooms

Web conferencing can be used as an online counterpart to classroom-based tutorials, seminars or any synchronous (real-time) learning activity, such as collaborative, project-based work. Its most typical applications are for one-to-many slides-based presentations (webcasts) and many-to-many group meetings (webinars), but it can also include one-to-one private tutorial or innovative assessment sessions. The Virtual Classroom is highly multi-modal, with simultaneous video, voice, text chat, whiteboard annotations and screen sharing, making it a rich and dynamic — but also complex — learning environment.

5. Assemble Course Components: Assessments

Align assessments with learning outcomes and choose methods that demonstrate learning while reducing stressors and minimizing cheating. Include multiple types of assessments in your course to allow for holistic and diverse opportunities to evaluate learning and performance.

Particularly during a situation in which students were not expecting to complete their courses online, high-stakes testing in the online environment can create additional stress in an already stressful environment, and impact accurate reflection of learning. Additionally, the use of proctoring tools to prevent cheating raise privacy concerns (especially for students who did not choose an online environment for the course), potentially cause undue stress on students, and may have excessive flags for potential cheating due to the circumstances of working/ learning at home during a crisis. Considering alternative (or additional) options for assessment allows for more accurate assessment of learning and avoids some of these challenges, which can result in a better experience for both you and your students.

Also, integrating multiple forms of assessment allows students more opportunities to evaluate their performance. Four possible alternative assessment methods are:

- focusing on skills that can be applied outside of the classroom (authentic assessment),
- involving students in the learning and assessment process (active assessment),
- measuring learning throughout the learning process rather than at the end (formative assessment)
- engaging students in work either offline or even just online but outside of the LMS (experiential assessment)

These methods provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, allow instructors to understand students' application of learning, and may reduce testing stress, environmental stress, and cheating behaviors in an online course.

Assignments Considerations

- ☐ Have you provided clear and understandable descriptions of each assignment?
- ☐ Have you set a realistic timeline between the time the student receives the assignment instructions and the time that it is due?
- ☐ Have you clearly explained how students are to submit their assignments and what the marking criteria will be?

6. Exams and other assessment activities

The Learning Hub provides robust tools to deliver online exams, as well as quizzes and self-assessments with feedback. If you decide to offer midterms and/or final exams through your online course, you will need to plan your exam in advance of delivering your course to ensure that it works online.

Multiple choice (or similar) assessments are still an option, and still have value for online courses. They are a great low-stakes option for learning practice (i.e. allow students to re-take multiple times, use as a 'check for understanding,' allow for open-book test-taking, etc.), and there are also many options for minimizing cheating that do not rely on proctoring. When using multiple-choice assessments in the online environment, randomized questions, shuffled answer options, and large question pools are great options that address some of the challenges with this type of assessment.

Exam features

Here are some potential features that you can set for your exams:

- You can set time limits on exams.
- You can set the number of attempts.
- You can randomize the order the questions appear in.
- You can create a bank of questions from which a set number of questions appear.
- You can include a question that requires students to pledge they will not cheat.

Considering your options

There are multiple measures you can take to enable academic integrity. How you proceed depends on what is at stake for your exam and the context in which your exam is viewed. Some programs at BCIT require proctoring, for example, in order to meet accreditation requirements. But maybe your program doesn't, so you might be able to use other measures to design a solid exam for your students.

Here is a review of the continuum of your options that start with design ideas and few or no measures, and ends with proctoring in order to mitigate academic dishonesty.

Assume students will be using external resources (eg. open-book):	
	If you use multiple-choice questions, ensure that they are applied-type or concept-related questions rather than simple recall-type questions
	Use long answer questions and construct questions that require students to use higher-order thinking skills, such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
	Ask students to sign an academic integrity question. Add a short-answer question at the beginning of the exam asking students to agree to an honour code. In this eLearning Coaching course, go to Quizzes where we have provided some examples. You can import these into your course from the Learning Hub's Learning Object Repository as well: Academic Conduct Integrity Pledge
	Give them the option of selecting one of three different questions about a particular topic instead of just one.
	For multiple-choice questions, randomize the distractors for each question.
	Randomize question sets whenever possible; this enables two students to receive two different exam question sets and/or in different order.
	Applying time constraints inhibits the ability to look for the answers beyond the exam.
	Rather than scheduling the exam so it could be taken at anytime over a large chunk of time, schedule it a very specific time so that all your students have to take it at roughly the same time, to avoid early test-takers sharing answers with later test-takers.
	Just before the exam is scheduled to start, go into your Learning Hub course and hide all the Content that is related to the exam so that students cannot see it.
	Use the Quizzes settings in the Learning Hub: • Add just one question per page • Disable right click • Disable pager and alerts • Apply time constraints for availability of the exam • Apply time limit to apply once test is launched • Allow one attempt (but two can better in case there are technical difficulties) • Use 'Overall Grade Calculation' to determine stakes if you allow multiple attempts
	Add a password to the exam and require students to find their own local proctor. Have the proctor sign a form promising that they will ensure the exam integrity. Provide the proctor with the exam password so that the proctor must be present to unlock the exam for the student.
	Use the remote the remote proctoring tool, Integrity Advocate
Assume students might cheat and/or copy questions for profit	

Exam Considerations

- ☐ Make sure exam procedures are explained clearly and thoroughly.
- ☐ Include exam schedules in the online course calendar
- ☐ Explain exam marking guidelines and procedures.

7. Assemble Course Components: Learning Materials

Re-thinking your teaching for an online environment will require you to determine how best to provide the materials and background content that your students will need to know. The course blueprint is meant to help you identify and detail what you require. When we talk about course content and learning materials, we are refer to an inexhaustibly broad range of formats, such as readings, course notes, presentation files, links to web and/or library resources, textbooks, and videos.

As you complete the blueprint, assess the current materials that you use to support your course. What can be re-purposed for online? What is missing? For items that are missing, can you source already existing materials, such as open educational resources or web-based resources?

Ask yourself what is feasible in the amount of time that you have to prepare. For example, if you typically present to your students in your class, will you continue to do the same in the online environment or do you have enough time to record yourself in advance using screencasting software? The following are some considerations for you to think about as you move forward.

Creating content within the Learning Hub

The Content tool enables you to create and organize your learning materials within the Learning Hub. Use the Content tool to:

- give directions to students about what you want them to do
- share resources with them by uploading documents and materials as well as
- creating your own web pages
- link to other resources externally, such as videos
- expound upon your topic, where you use this space to take the place of your direct teaching activities in-class
- embed images, videos, and interactive activities.
- link to other tools that you are using within your course in the Learning Hub to
- ensure that students encounter them in a learning pathway you have set for them

Content is divided in Modules, and once you create a module, each item you add is a topic. There are many ways to organize your course, but most of us either divide it into modules pertaining to a particular area, or divide it into weeks, to align with the schedule of the students as they get through your course.

Learning materials considerations

- ☐ Do you have handouts and/or PowerPoint presentations? What do they look like? Do they need to be revised to ensure the information is clear and the images are of good quality?

- ☐ Have you developed an unpublished student manual or reading packet that contains most of the course content? Does it need to be updated before you put it online?
- ☐ Do you use illustrations, diagrams or photographs? What do they look like? Do they communicate the intended information and concepts? Do they need to be revised or replaced?
- ☐ Do you use video or audio resources in the course? Do they need to be updated or improved in quality?
- ☐ Do your handouts or materials contain any copyrighted material? Have you obtained copyright clearance?
- ☐ Is all written content presented as text so students using assistive technologies can read it?
- ☐ Do the materials have a clear visual structure including headings, sub-heading, lists and tables?
- ☐ Are materials properly formatted/structured so they are accessible to students using screen readers?
- ☐ Are there any required textbooks for the course? Are they up-to-date? Do you need to supplement these textbooks in any way?
- ☐ Do your materials refer to websites? Do the links work? Is the information still current and relevant?
- ☐ Are other resources or course materials needed? If so, are they available?

If you are using course materials developed by others, you need to ensure that you are respecting copyright restrictions. Luckily, at BCIT, copyright experts can support you every step of the way.

- Copyright at BCIT, or
- Using the Copyright Decision Tool
- Avoiding Plagiarism - a 5-minute video from the BCIT library

As experienced instructors, you know that course development never ends; there is always a new idea, new approach, new activity that you would like to eventually incorporate into your teaching. Remember, course development is an iterative process. Try to do what is achievable now and save the rest for the next time.

8. Assemble Course Components: Opportunities for Interaction

Design your course to provide intentional opportunities for students to interact with the instructor, each other, and the course content. Student and faculty interaction are essential quality indicators in an online course setting.

Course interaction can be organized into three categories: student-to-student, instructor-to-student, and student-to-content interactions. Instructor-to-student interactions can be achieved online with class discussions, daily or weekly announcements, office hours, and providing substantive feedback. Opportunities for interaction can incorporate up to all four elements of assigning tasks, delivering content, giving & gathering feedback.

Especially in a situation where you and your students didn't plan on having an online educational experience, the most important thing is to ensure that interaction opportunities are available, and that you are regularly interacting with your students. Basic tools in the Learning Hub, such as discussion forums and the Virtual Classroom, do this in ways that are simple and already familiar to many students and instructors.

Use the Community of Inquiry framework to help you assess where you might be strengthening opportunities for interaction and engagement.

9. Designing the Structure of your Online Course

Deciding your Course level Design

Typically, distance courses are divided into modules. When starting to build an online course in the Learning Hub, we start with the overall course content organization so that we can create the table of contents. How you decide to organize your course is eventually reflected in the Content section of the Learning Hub. You do not need to divide your course into modules, however. The Learning Hub itself uses the terminology of 'module' for each chunk or container of learning, which can be confusing.

Some instructors divide their courses by weeks, and put everything required for a particular week together. They will create a Learning Hub module and title it, "Week 2". In that module called Week 2, they add everything students will need, such as a page giving them directions of what to do, assignment materials, reading materials, links to other sites, uploaded videos, and links to other tools used with the Learning Hub, such as a discussion forum.

Other instructor will instead call their Learning Hub modules, "module". For example, they will create a module and call it, "Module 2: Introduction to Teaching Online". Again, they will add everything that students will need to complete that module. The scheduling of the module, however, might take three weeks to complete. By not connecting the module with the particular week, these instructors must ensure they provide students with an additional schedule at the beginning so that students can plan their time.

These are just two of the most common ways to structure your course and there is no right or wrong way. It should be clear to your students what is expected of them, what they must do, and where they must go in your course to complete their work.

Two samples of the overall organization as it might appear in the Table of Contents in the Content section of a Learning Hub course follow.

Sample Fully Online Course Organization Structure – Sample 1

Course Information

- Welcome to the course
- Course Outline
- Weekly Schedule
- How this course works
- Instructor bio
- Course resources
- How to get help

Assignment Information

- Assignment #1
- Assignment #2
- Assignment #3

Module 1

  - How to complete Module 1
  - Content/activities
  - Content/activities
  - Content/activities
  - Content/activities
  - Summary
  - Discussion forum
  - Self-quiz

Module 2

  - How to complete Module 2
  - Content/activities
  - Content/activities
  - Content/activities
  - Content/activities
  - Summary
  - Discussion forum
  - Self-quiz

- Module 3, 4, ...

Sample Fully Online Course Organization Structure – Sample 2

Course Information

- Welcome to the course
- Course Outline
- Weekly Schedule
- How this course works
- Instructor bio
- Course resources
- How to get help

Course Evaluation Information

- Test 1
- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2
- Group Project
- Final Exam

Week 1

- What to do for Week 1
- Readings
- Learning Activities:
  - Brief content/activities
  - Brief content/activities
  - Brief content/activities
- Summary
- Self-quiz

Week 2

- What to do for Week 2
- Learning Activities:
  - Brief content/activities
  - Brief content/activities
  - Brief content/activities
- Summary
- Self-quiz

- Module 3, 4, ...

Deciding your Module-level Design

Module Organization

Modules (and we mean in the Learning Hub definition of module) in the same course are often organized around the same parts in order to provide consistency and direction.

Each course, including yours, is unique, but typical module parts include for a fully online course are:

- An **introductory section** that tells learners the objectives of the module
- A **what-to-do section**, that tells learners the tasks required to successfully complete the module,
- A **resources section** that tells learners what textbook pages, readings, websites, and other resources they will need to complete the module
- **Content sections** that can contain text, graphics, video, animations, links to other websites, .pdfs, etc..
- **Learner activity sections** that either give learners directions to perform an activity or is the activity itself, such as online quizzes, discussion forum, submit an assignment in the dropbox, or use of interactive media.
- A **summary section** that remind students of key points for the module (relevant to exams or assignments, for example), highlight what they will encounter in the next module.

When you are developing your online presence for a Blended and Hyflex course, you will probably not need all of these elements as you will be meeting with your students synchronously and will have opportunities to communicate these elements to them at that point. But remember, the more fully online your course, the more it is necessary to explicitly communicate the above elements; without such communication, your students are at a loss for what your intentions are for them (you are not asserting your teaching presence and without that, they lose a sense of what you are intending.)

10. Assemble Course Components: Orientation Module

Each online course should have an orientation module at the very beginning that will help students understand how your course works and what is required of them to be successful. It could be called, “Getting Started”, or “Course Orientation”, or “Start Here” or whatever you feel suits your course best. The most important point is that one exists. In face-to-face courses, you have the opportunity to introduce yourself and the course, and to meet your students and allow them to get to know each other. This sets the ‘tone’ of the course and expectations, and facilitates trust. An up-front Getting Started module sets to accomplish the same outcome.

The orientation module can include the following the sections:

- Introduction to the course
- Learning outcomes
- How this course works
- Course schedule
- Organizing and managing your course progress
- About your instructor
- Course readings and textbooks
- Assignments, exams and activities
- Tech tips and getting help
- About the curriculum

However you decide to organize this part of your online course, ensure that it contains these elements:

Set expectations:

In online courses, there are fewer cues from both students and instructors about expectations, making it essential to clearly state expectations for performance and interaction. Communicate to your students what you need them to do, what you expect from them and what they can expect from you.

Student-instructor Communication

Providing opportunities for students to communicate with you in an online course is essential to establishing your instructor presence. Students do not necessarily see or interact with instructors in real-time in the online environment, and ensuring that there are effective opportunities for communication is critical. Decide what would work best for your teaching circumstances and style: will you be holding virtual office hours? Do you want students to email

you with questions? Can they telephone you? Decide what you want them to do and how, and then make sure they know it.

Course Policies:

Your online course should include specific policies underlying expectations and requirements for student participation and course completion, providing students with a clear understanding of their responsibilities as an online student. Include information on appropriate etiquette in the online classroom in your course.

11. Analyze and Review

Once you have a working blueprint, take a step back. Analyze a range of possibilities for the course, and try to determine the best approach to teaching and learning. That is, what is the best way to make the online course the most active and engaging experience possible for the learner?

Use this Online Course Checklist [DOC] as a guideline when developing your online course (You can use it as a reference for developing a face-to-face course as well).

Reviewing Your Course Design before Delivery

We are jumping ahead here. You have built your course and you are now wondering if you're ready.

Here is some advice: makes some time for a trial run, if possible.

Trial run

An evaluation period is strongly recommended but difficult to make happen. This trial run, or pilot, allows time to evaluate the online environment. A pilot delivery of the course is ideal, so that you can gather feedback from participants in a systematic way. But pilots are often not feasible. Instead, perhaps work with colleagues to have them review your course from a student's perspective before you go live. Regardless if you are reviewing it yourself or working with others, these are the main things we look for:

- ☐ Check how things work in the Learning Hub environment. Is it easy to navigate?
- ☐ Is on-screen text readable, clear and concise?
- ☐ Are directions consistent? If they are linked to a web tool, is the web tool there, regardless of whether or not it is hyperlinked? (ensuring no orphan directions)
- ☐ Are 'landmarks' within the course evident (eg. 'Getting started page')?
- ☐ Do all links function and offer information as promised (PDFs, facts, etc). Is all link text live?

Note problems, and make any necessary changes.

And now you are ready to go live!

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